A Short
DISCOVERY
Of certain
TRUTHS of GOD,

According as they are revealed through the manifestation of the eternal light of the Son of Righteousneſſe;

Which are

A Reply againſt two things, in an Epiſtle:

And,

An Anſwer to certain Queries contained in a Book,

Intituled,

Chriſtian Queries, to Quaking Chriſtians,

Subſcribed by one *J. B.*

Alſo Queries propounded, to be anſwered by the Authour of the ſame Book, or any other.

By JOHN STORY.

But ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready alwaies to give an anſwer to every man that asketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſſe and fear, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15.

Printed in the year, 1664.

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A Pamphlet, or little book being come to my hands, intituled, Christian Queries to Quaking Christians, *&c. By one who subscribes himself* I. B. *with an Epistle to the Reader, from one who subscribes himself* I. A. *And I having duly weighed, and seriously considered both the Epistle, and the Queries, I return this following Reply against two things in the Epistle, with an Answer to the Queries.*

First, to the Epistle, in the Frontispiece of which *I. A.* saith,

Go little book, improve thy Scripture skill,
Advance the truth, and throw down all self-will.

Reply. IT is not in the power of that little book, or any other writing, how holy, or good soever they may be in themselves, either to advance the truth, or beat down the self-will, & haughty pride of man; farther then they are accompanied with the living word, Spirit, and power of the Lord God: therefore may I say, much more it is not in the power of that little Book, either to throw down self-will in any, in whom it is not yet subdued, or to exalt the truth in general; because its only queries, gathered by the Authour from the Letter of the Scriptures without, and no message of heavenly prophesy, doctrine, or exhortation, received by the Authour from the Lord, through the divine inspiration of his light, and Spirit within, whose light, Spirit, and power operating in the hearts of men, is that only means, which becomes effectual to accomplish the things before mentioned, *viz.* the laying low the pride of all flesh, and the exaltation of the name, and truth of God, in the world. Therefore may I say, it's a very vain, and idolatrous exhortation, which *I. A.* hath given to *I. B.* his little book.

And *I. A.* further saith, *Let light without be guide to light within.*

Reply. If by this exhortation *I. A.* means, that light without should guide the true light, which shines in the hearts of Saints, which I cannot but gather from the forementioned words: then, I must needs say, 'tis a very absurd, and foolish exhortation, and being spoken upon a divine account; it is very full of idolatry, and evil, and greatly contrary to the Gospel, and exhortation of Gods Embassadours to the Saints upon earth; which was, that they should abide in the light, or

anointing that was in them, 1 *John* 2. 27. And the Apostle preferreth the light, that God hath caused to shine into their hearts, so far beyond any perishing thing, or light without, that he exalts it, as that excellent means, by which he, & the Saints received the knowledge unto everlasting life, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. Where he saith, *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Many more testimonies proving the same truth, might be instanced. And though the holy Scriptures without, and the Saints practises are as lights in the world: yet far be it from all true Christian men, so to idolize them; as to set them in esteem above the light, which is sufficient to guide, or to esteem them equal with the light, and Spirit of Christ within, from which the Scriptures were given forth, which are but branches of that holy root, and as it were fruits of that heavenly tree, *viz.* the appearance of God in the hearts of his people. If *I. A.* had bid people mind the doctrines, and exhortations of the holy Scripture, which testifies of, and exhorts to Christ, the true, and never erring light, in the hearts of his followers, he had done better. But what I have already in love said, I shall leave to his more serious, and better consideration.

1. Query. *How, and by what means may salvation be attained, whether by adhering to light within us, or by faith in Christ without us?* (1) *if the later be not the best way, why is it, that the Scriptures do so often bid us to believe in Jesus Christ, and that by so doing, we may be saved,* 3 Joh. 15, 16. *Acts* 16. 30, 31. (2) *or if the former be the better way? if so I would then ask farther.*

Answ. Salvation is to be obtained through believing, and walking in the obedience unto Christ Jesus, who is that only true and saving light, which lighteth every man that comes into the world, *John* 1. 9. And all mankind, who cometh out of that night of darkness, which hath overshadowed the whole world, and from under the cloud of errour, that hath covered all the inhabitants of the earth, must both believe, receive, and walk in the light of the Lamb, *Rev.* 21. 24. which is the best and most excellent way: though we must confesse, as Jesus, the true light of the world, is God blessed forever; our vessels are not able to contain him, because his presence is infinite, and fills heaven and earth; and as he is thus infinite in himself, we must confesse, that he

he is as real without us as within us: yet the true knowledge and faith, which we with all the Saints have in Christ unto our salvation, is not of him at a distance without us, but even in him, as he is near at hand, by his light, and spirit revealed within us; according to what the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 1. 19. *That, which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them.* And *Col.* 1. 27. the Apostle saith, *To whom God would make known, what is the riches of the glory of this mystery amongst the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.* Therefore I say, the hope, which we with all true Christians have, whereby we may attain heaven, where all felicity and happiness is enjoyed for ever, is not by any knowledge of Christ at a distance without us, but as he is inwardly revealed, by his light and Spirit in our hearts; and they who thus know him, have and do experience the virtue of his precious bloud, which was shed for many, to wash away their sin, and to purge them from all their transgressions. And this is that knowledge, which a man may have, and not dye, for the soul that hath it lives to God in this world, and shall reign with Christ to all eternity, in the world to come. And because this is the best and most excellent way for Christians both to believe in, and receive Christ unto their everlasting salvation; therefore it is, that the holy Scriptures testifie of Christ being revealed unto the Saints, in this way: but neither the Scriptures which thou hast instanced, nor any other exhorts Christians to believe in Christ, as he is at a distance without them; but the contrary, *Rom.* 10. 6, 7, 8.

2. Query. *Whether the light within us be a sufficient guide to direct us unto true happinesse? and what this light is? whether in every man? or how to be attained?* (1.) *if this light be sufficient to salvation, of what use are the Scriptures? And why are we at all exhorted unto faith, which implyeth something at a distance, and not yet enjoyed?* Heb. 11. 1. 3.

Answ. The light of Jesus within us is a sufficient guide to direct and lead us, which all them that walk in it, out of darkness and misery, to the inheritance of glory, and joy with the sanctified in Christs spiritual Kingdome, according as our Saviour, who is this light, testifieth of himself, *John* 8. 12. where he saith, *I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*; and *Zechariah* prophesying of him, whose light is sufficient

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to guide men out of errour and darkneſſe, ſaith *Luke*, 1.78, 79. Through the tender mercy of our God, the day ſpring from on high hath viſited us, to give light to them that ſit in darkneſſe, and in the ſhadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. By theſe two teſtimonies may this truth be confirmed, *viz.* that the light of Jeſus, which ſhines within us, is ſufficient both to direct and lead us to true happineſſe.

Secondly, this true light, (in which we walk, & give teſtimony to the world, and ſay, it is that unto which all mankind muſt be turned, that come to receive remiſſion of ſins, *Act.* 26.18.) is no other, but even Jeſus the everlaſting ſon of God, as the Scriptures teſtifieth, *John* 1.9. and *John* 8.12. *Rev.* 21, 24.

Thirdly, This true light lighteth every man, as it is before already proved, *John* 1.9. And he that deſires to attain the knowledge of Jeſus, the true light, let him not ſay in his heart, who ſhall aſcend, or deſcend, *Rom.* 10. and 6.7. for Chriſt the light is near, whoſe beams, in a ſmall meaſure, ſhines in the darkneſſe of his heart, according to *John* 1.4.5. and may be known by its operation of manifeſting the ſecret evils there, which are reproved, and through it, he comes to have a deſcerning between the inward thoughts, and deſires, which would incline his heart towards God; and thoſe which would, or doth cauſe his heart to decline from God: therefore he that would attain to the knowledge of Chriſt, (whoſe light gives him in ſome meaſure the knowledge of himſelf, as is before ſaid) muſt in love and obedience to Chriſt (whoſe light convinceth him of ſin) confeſſe and forſake his ſin, in which obedience man comes to receive that heavenly power of God, which begets him again out of ſin and death, and makes him partaker of the divine nature, and life of Chriſt, the light, in which he comes to ſee light, & to have the excellent knowledge of that everlaſting ſon, through which, in ſome meaſure, he ſaw the filthineſſe of ſin, and the motions of it in his heart; while as yet he had not the knowledge of the light, neither could it comprehend.

Fourthly, Becauſe this light is ſufficient, of great uſe are the Scriptures which teſtifieth of, and directeth to this light, and exhorteth, Chriſtians to the growing in faith, and belief in Jeſus, who is the true light, and Saviour of the world, and able to ſave to the utmoſt, *Heb.* 7.25. *Heb.* 5.9.

3. Query.

3. Query. *Whether is this light the conſcience of every man? or* (2.) *is it Chriſt in every man? if ſo, why then are not all men ſaved? for if he that hath not this light be out of Chriſt* (*as you ſay*) *then all, that have this light, muſt of neceſſity be in Chriſt, and conſequently ſaved,* 2 *Cor.* 13.5. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17.

Anſw. This light is not the conſcience of every man, neither is it the conſcience of any man, but is that heavenly light, by which God lightens the conſciences of the ſons of men, to diſtinguiſh between good and evil, as I have already ſaid. And all they that believe in, and obey the motions of Gods Spirit, by the light of his Son, he will lead them out of all darkneſſe, and errour, and guide them in the way everlaſting, and he will give them richly to poſſeſſe, the evidence of his light and Spirit upon their conſciences, that they are his children. Herein they come to partake of that peace which never ſhall have an end.

Secondly, though we do not ſay, that every man knows, or hath received Chriſt within; yet we ſay the beams of his light lighteth all men, in which his grace, that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to them, 1 *Tit.* 2. 11. And hereby his good Spirit is tendered to inſtruct them, notwithſtanding they rebell againſt him, *Neh.* 9. 20, 26. And this is the cauſe, that all men are not ſaved, *viz.* their not believing in, but rejecting the light of his ſalvation, and rebelling againſt his Spirit, which ſhould inſtruct them in the way thereof, through which Spirit, all men that continue in ſin ſhall be left without excuſe, whoſe deſtruction is of themſelves.

4. Query. *Whether that way which you teach, and the doctrines you maintain and propagate, be conſonant to, and may be defended by the word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, whether it be not neceſſary to have ſome rule of trial, by which we may try the ſpirits, whether they be of God, or no?* 1 John 4. 1, 2, 3. *And* (2.) *whether the Scriptures be not ſufficient thereunto, or is there any better way to be propounded for ſuch a tryal? and* (3.) *if there be any better way, why are we directed by the Prophet* Eſaiah *to the Law, and to the teſtimony, and if any man ſpeak otherwiſe, it is becauſe there is no light in him? as* Eſai. 8. 20. *and* (4.) *why were the* Bereans *commended for ſearching the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo?* Act. 17. 11. *Laſtly, if the Scriptures are not to be the rule for all Doctrines, why is it that the Apoſtle doth ſo ſeverely,*

verely, and that over and over again, pronounce a curse against all such as should preach any other Gospel, then what he had already preached? which is onely to be found in the Scriptures, as Gal. 1. 7, 8, 9.

Answ. The doctrines, which we maintain, and propagate, are consonant to, and may be defended by the forceable arguments of truth, and holy records thereof contained in the Old and New Testament.

First, It is necessary to have a rule of tryal, to try the spirits, whether they be of God, as *I. B.* hath already instanced, 1 *Iohn* 4. 1, 2, 3. And he, that in some measure hath it not, is not yet settled, or grounded upon Gods foundation; but is unstable, and may be tossed to and fro, by every wind of doctrine, ready to be beguiled by every false motion, and device of the enemy of the soul inwardly, and to be led aside with the cunning craftinesse of evil men outwardly; even like a ship without an anchor, left to the mercy of the wind, and the seas, ready to suffer shipwrack every moment, therefore how wholesome was the counsel of our Saviour to his Disciples, to have salt in themselves, *Luke* 9. 50. and he tells them that they are the salt of the earth, *Mat.* 5. 13. he that wants this salt which seasons, gives to savour, and discern between what is of God, and what is not of God, is, or may easily be deceived, or misled by that spirit of errour, through which men becomes vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction.

Secondly, The Scriptures are not the most sufficient rule of tryal, (not in any dispraise unto them be it spoken) because it is possible that men, by that Spirit, which is not of God, may not only speak according to, but use the very same words, as the Apostles and Ministers of Christ did, and do unto this day; so that (whiles they speak not contrary words or doctrines) that Spirit at many times cannot by the rule of Scriptures be detected: though it's true, many Spirits there are, which may be proved not to be of God by the Scriptures, for their speaking and acting contrary thereunto: but the forementioned Spirit, (which is Satan transformed into an angel of light, or into a person, who hath sometimes prophesied in the name of Christ, and declared the joyfull tydings of the everlasting day cannot be discerned, but by the immortal light or Spirit, from which the Scriptures were given forth, and though many have, and may be zealous for the letter of the Scriptures; yet thereby they do not discern Satan in this deceivable appea-

pearance, in which he ſteals the words of the true prophets, and in declaration of words, and doctrine may ſeem to ſpeak like an angel, or meſſenger of God, even ſpeaking the ſame words with a falſe ſpirit, as hath ſometimes been ſpoken through the ſame perſon by the true Spirit: but the inward knowledge of this is a great myſtery, which is hid from all worldly, and ſinfull men: but is opened by the Lord unto that ſpiritual man, which judgeth all things, yea, Angels, who are made able to put a true difference between the angels of God, that in truth ſerve him, and thoſe, who in outward appearance ſeem to be his angels, and yet ſerve him not: therefore ſpiritual and heavenly men have a more ſure rule to try ſpirits by, then the Scriptures, which is the unction that they have received from the Holy One, (1 *John* 2. 20.) that gives them to diſcern of ſpirits, and the matters that belong thereunto, that differs in nature and quality. though not in profeſſion, nor outward appearance: and this is that infallible rule of tryal, which may (and not with any derogation from the authority which belongs to the holy Scriptures) truly be ſaid to be better then the Scriptures; inſomuch as it is the ſame life and Spirit of Chriſt, manifeſt in the hearts of Saints, from which the Scriptures were given forth: and therefore muſt in all things have the preheminence. For this holy unction in the hearts of true Chriſtians, is that ſpiritual law in Chriſt Jeſus, through which they have the teſtimony, (as their father *Abraham* had) of Chriſts glorious day, in the ſight of which their hearts are made exceeding glad; and if any man want light to diſcern and try what ſpirits are of God, and what ſpirits are not of God, let him look into the ſpiritual law of Chriſt, which is a light that ſhines within, through which the heavenly teſtimony is received; as it is written, If any man want light, let him look upon the law, and the teſtimony, and ſee, if they ſpeak not according to this meaning, as the old tranſlation renders it, *Iſa.* 8.

Thirdly, though the Scriptures be not the moſt infallible ſure rule to try all doctrines by, (as is before ſhewed) yet I ſay, curſed be that man that preacheth another Goſpel, then that which the Scriptures teſtifies of, which is the power of God unto ſalvation, as it is preached by the ſame divine authority and power, as it was in the dayes of the Apoſtles: but that either the power, or all the words of the Goſpel are to be found extant in the Scriptures, I do deny; for as it is written by

G18 the Evangelist, *John* 21. and the last. *There are also many other things, which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world it self could not contain the books that should be written, Amen.* And doubtlesse many heavenly and saving doctrines were preached by the Apostles, as they ran to and fro upon earth in that Gospel-day, (in which knowledge was encreased) which we have not extant at this day: therefore all the wholesome doctrines and exhortations that they preached, are not [*only*] to be found in the Scriptures,

4. Query. *Whether all men do or may attain perfection in this life? and whether any that come short of this perfection may be saved; or* (1.) *Whether those texts of Scripture that exhorts us to be perfect, may not imply certain degrees of perfection, rather then perfection it self, as to the heighth of it? And* (2.) *whether there be not a perfection of sincerity, as well as of degrees? And* (3.) *whether believers may not be perfect by imputation of his righteousnes, who knowing no sin, yet was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousnes of God in him? 2 Cor. 5. 21.*

Answ. All men do not attain perfection in this life, because many there are that do reject the means ordained by our heavenly Father, through which otherwise they might receive freedome from sin, and obtain perfect dominion over it, to reign in victory with the Lamb for evermore.

All that die in the faith of Christ shall be saved, though they be even babes in Christ, and far short of that attainment in life, wisedom, dominion, and strength (as to the fulnesse of it) as it is manifest in the perfect man, who is come even to the measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ, *Eph.* 4. 13. In whom all rule, and authority, and power contrary to God, is put down, and he crowned with perfect dominion over all his spiritual enemies, reigning as a King in the triumphant victory over sin, death, and the grave, in the image of the heavenly which he bears, in which the perfect life of the new man is known, that walks with God in this world, and that shall live and reign with him perpetually in the world to come; for spirituall men in this triumphant state, have received the end for which the blessed ministry of the Gospel was given, which was for the perfecting of the Saints, *Eph.* 4. 12.

But,

But, as I have already said, the Saints which die in the faith shall be saved, though they be far short of that excellent state of perfect men in Christ, who are witnesses of his fulnesse and stature. For some of Gods people die, or put off this earthly tabernacle soon after their conversion, while they are but even young in the faith, and children, even babes in the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet through faith they are heirs of the promise, and by the birth immortal they have a true title to the Kingdome of God, though such who are weak in the faith may be so assaulted many times with doubts, false fears, and temptations of the evil one, and in their departure even so strongly beset, as the perfect man in Christ is not, because all his spiritual enemies are conquered, and put in subjection: so that he is in rest, being perfectly assured, when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, he hath a house not made with hands, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

First, those Scriptures, which exhort to perfection, doubtlesse intends perfection it self in the heighth of it, as well as in the degrees; though the Saints (which attains it) attain it by degrees, as by growing from one degree of grace and strength in Christ unto another, as the Psalmist saith, *They go from strength to strength, until every one appears before God in Sion*, Psal. 84. 7. And the Apostle said, *When he was a child, he spake as a child, understood as a child, and thought as a child, but when he became a man, he put away childish things*, 1 Cor. 13. 11.

Secondly, there is a perfection of sincerity, and he, that through the faith and power of our Lord Jesus, attains this perfection of sincerity, ceaseth from all sin, and he that in this sincerity, or any degree of it believes and walks in obedience to the Gospel, is justified through the righteousnesse of our Lord Jesus, of which he is an heir through faith.

5. Query. *Whether Jesus Christ did not institute, and appoint certain ordinances under the Gospel for his Churches to observe and keep until his coming?* (1.) *Did he not institute that ordinance of his Supper, and enjoyn his disciples to observe it in remembrance of him!* Luke 22. 19, 20. *And* (2.) *is it not recorded of the Primitive Church how they continued this ordinance?* Acts 2. 46. (3.) *Why doth the Apostle* Paul *commend the practice of it to the Church of* Corinth, *and tells them whence he had it? for* (saith he) *I have received*

618 ceived of the Lord that which I delivered unto you; and so repeats the manner how it was first instituted, 1 Cor. 11. 23. 26. or, (4.) are these ordinances ceased, and now out of date? if so, pray tell us when they first expired? hath not himself told us, that they should last untill his coming? or is he already come, and we knew it not? if he be, it must be onely by his spiritual presence, and so he was with the Primitive Church, and that in a greater measure then now adayes, yet did they continue in all the ordinances of the Gospel. Or (5.) may we not rather understand his coming to be meant of his second coming, spoken of by the Angel at his ascention, when he shall come in like manner, as he was seen to goe into heaven, Acts 1. 10, 11.

Answ. The matter in question is a thing about which there hath been more idolatry, and evil practized by the false Christians, than any other thing pertaining to Christian Religion, since the dark and long night of Apostacy that hath overshadowed *Christendome*, which Apostacy was beginning to come in, even in the Apostles dayes. Oh! when I consider the bloud of Christians which hath been shed about this very thing, it doth afflict my very heart, and cause my soul to cry alas, alas, that ever Christians should be so far deluded, & misled, as to shed the bloud one of another about the outward practice of Christianity, which are but (in comparison to the more weighty matters) as the very outward Courts or Suburbs of Christian Religion.

Christ did institute the breaking of Bread, as it is written, when our Saviour with his disciples was eating the Passeover a Feast of the *Jews*, pertaining to the ministration of the Law, in which was many shadows of good things to come. And as they were eating this Passover according to the Law, he said unto his Disciples, *With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will no more eat thereof, till it be fulfilled in the Kingdome of God*, Luk. 22. 15, 16. and as they were eating, he took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave it to them, saying, *This is my body which is given for you, this doe in remembrance of me*: likewise he took the Cup after Supper, saying, *This Cup is the new Testament in my bloud which is shed for you*, Mark 14. 20. Luke 22. 19, 20. and by this sign, his death, who is our Passover was signified, or shewed, and not onely by the Bread, and the Cup, but by the Lamb without blemish, of which a bone was not to be broken, *Exod.* 12. 46. in which

which practice, they continued unto his coming, even so to remember him when they break the Bread, and drank the Cup, as that thereby they shewed forth his death till he came, not eating and drinking damnation unto themselves, as those who did, and doth break the Bread, and drink the Cup unworthily, who eats to the lust, and drinks to the lust, even feeding themselves without fear, whose table is not the table of the Lord, but the table of Devils, at which they are so far from discerning the Lords body, and fulnesse, (which fills all in all) that they neither break that Bread in remembrance of him, nor to him, but even to the lust, by which he was crucified and slain; but the Disciples (who practized this outward sign by which his death was shewn) were witnesses of his resurrection, and coming again, not onely unto (but spiritually to dwell in) them according to his promise, where he saith, *I will not leave you comfortlesse, I will come unto you*, John 14. 18. in which he eat with them, and they with him, as he said, *I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the Vine, untill that day, I shall drink it new with you in my fathers Kingdome*, Mat. 26. 29. and I say unto you, I will no more eat thereof, untill it be fulfilled in the Kingdome of God; but the inward enjoyment of the substance of this outward sign (by which was signified the death or sacrifice of Christ, the immaculate Lamb of God, who is our spiritual Passover that is sacrificed for us) is a mystery (which by the vulturous eye was never seen) as it is fulfilled to the true Disciples in Christ spiritual Kingdome, in which our Saviour sups with them, and they with him, and is no other then that spiritual Feast, which is kept amongst the children of God, for whom Christ their Passover is sactificed, and by his power they purge out the old leaven, and keep this spiritual Feast not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. 8. for the bread of God which comes down from Heaven, is that by which they keep this spiritual feast, and the flesh and bloud of Christ is this bread which the holy people break, and spiritually feed upon, and the incomes of his love is that spirituall wine, by which he doth wonderfully refresh their souls, through which they come to grow into the endlesse life, and in which they more abundantly partake of the everlasting consolation that is in Christ Jesus, in which they spiritually eat and drink with him, and he with them (who are his lillies) in his heavenly

620 venly Kingdome. And this is a small hint of that spiritual Passeover or feast which was and is kept by the Saints in this glorious Gospel-day, through which the night is expelling, and the shadowes vanishing away. Glory, glory be unto the Lord our God for ever.

But to return, this practice of breaking of bread together, was continued by the Apostles in the Churches, as *I. B.* hath already instanced, *Acts* 2. 46. *And they brake bread from house to house, and ate their meat with singleness of heart*, as is the practice of true Christians at this day, and in which they ought to continue to the end, that whether they eat, they may eat unto the Lord, or whether they drink, they may do it unto him, not making an idol of the creature, or any Christian practice be it never so good in it self; but may both eye and discern the Lord in all their practices and duties, which was that good end for which the Apostle delivered unto the Church of *Corinth*, the thing in question practised by Christ and his Apostles at the Passeover, which many did soon abuse if not idolize even in his time, for which he often reproved them, 1 *Cor.* 10. 14. 1 *Cor.* 11. 20. where he saith, *When ye come together, this is not to eat the Lords Supper, for in eating every one takes before other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another drunken*; and tells them *vers.* 25, 26. *As often as they break the bread, and drink the cup, they should do it in remembrance, saying, they that eat, and drink unworthily, eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lords body*, vers. 29. Oh that all drunkards, and gluttoners, ignorant persons who make an idol of the creature, in breaking the bread, and drinking the cup unworthily, Oh that they would seriously consider, and lay these things to heart, that they may not henceforth any more break the bread, and drink the cup unworthily, in the sinfull lust of the flesh, the doing of which brings them to be guilty of the body, and blood of the Lord, in that they eat to (and feed the) same lusts of the world, as was in them which slew him; and none can be partakers of the table of the Lord, while they thus feed at the table of Devils, 1 *Cor.* 10. 21. But it may be the enemy will tell them, it is no such thing, for they neither ate nor drank that day, before they break that bread and drink that cup, and call to natural memory with trembling and fear, before they practice the thing before mentioned, that Christs body was broken for them, and his bloud shed

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for them, the which, I say, all this thou maist do, and yet be an idolatrous and unworthy eater in an unholy fear, adoring the outward bread, and the cup beyond what is meet, even as there are too many that look upon it to be more then a sign, and worship it as the thing signified: and so in ignorance worship the bread, and the cup as a God at sometime, and at other times using it without that holy fear, and remembrance in which Christs body is discerned, and the heavenly virtues, and fulnesse thereof enjoyed, which fills all things, and is that glorious and everlasting substance which lives and remains when all created excellencies come to an end, and shadows are past away, and is that eternal fountain which fills with spiritual grace and satisfaction all that in sincerity love him for ever and for evermore.

6. Query. *Whether Christians are not bound to the performance of such religious duties as were practised by the people of God under the law, and not abrogated by the Gospel?* (1.) *Whether Christians ought not to pray morning and evening, as* David *very frequently did, evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice,* Psa. 55. 17. *Or* (2.) *Is it not lawfull for Christians to appoint and set apart a convenient time and season for the performance of religious exercises, as did* Daniel, *who not withstanding the Kings command, thought himself obliged not to omit his duty once, but prayed three times a day,* Dan. 6. 10, 13. *Or* (3.) *Are we only to pray when our own spirits move us, and not at the motion of Gods Spirit which bids us to pray continually, or to be always in a frame, and frequent in the duty of prayer,* 1 Thes. 5. 17. *Or* (4.) *Whether it be not a duty incumbent upon all Christians to exercise family duties, as the people of God in former times did? whether parents ought not to instruct their children, & masters their servants, for which God so much commended* Abraham, *because he would command his children & his houshold after him,* Gen. 18. 17, 18, 19. (5.) *Whether it be the duty of all Christians frequently to read over & confer about the holy Scriptures both in their families, & with others, as the Lord commanded the children of Israel, thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou lyest down,* Deut. 6. 7. *Nay* (6.) *Whether is it not necessary for all Christians to beg Gods blessing with and return him thanks for every mercy they receive? according to the*

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622 *practice of our blessee Saviour, who when he fed so many thousands, would first look up to heaven for a blessing upon what they enjoyed on earth*, Mat. 6.41. *And after his Resurrection, he practised the same thing amongst his disciples*, Luke 24. 30. *Whose blessed example the Apostle followed taking bread, and giving thanks in the presence of them all*, Acts 27. 35. *further recommending it to the practice of others, that in every thing they would give thanks as the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning them*, 1 Thess. 5. 18.

Answ. Christians are bound to the practice of many religious duties which was practised by the people of God under the Law; for though the cerimonies, types, and shadws of the Law, or first Covenant are abolished by the Gospel, yet the weighty matters are not abolished, or made void through faith in Christ Jesus, as it is written, *Do we through faith make void the Law, God forbid*, Rom. 3. 31. Through faith we establish the Law: for it is by virtue of faith in the Gospel, that Christians are fully enabled to practice those religious duties, which were commanded under the Law, *viz.* to love God with all their heart, and with all their mind; for our Saviour calls this the first, and great Commandement, saying, the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self, and on these two commandements hang the whole Law, and the Prophets, *Mat.* 22. 37, 38, 39, 40. these religious duties with many other righteous practises of the people of God under the Law, are indeed binding to Christians under the Gospel.

First Christians ought to live and continue in sincere desires after God at all times, and to pray unto him not onely at morning, evening, and at noon day, but at all seasons and hours, wherein they shall find the immortal birth of life inclining their hearts to seek after him, and his spirit to help their infirmities, without the help of which, Christians cannot pray, ask, or seek aright, as it is written, *Rom.* 8. 26. 27. We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit it self maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and the motions of this immortal life, and spirit of our heavenly Father, is not limitted to dayes, set times, places or houres of dayes, but when, and what time it inclines and moves Christians are to follow, and as they seek through, and by its assistance, they shall find, and as they ask in the life, and nature thereof, they shall receive theirs hearts

hearts desire, and obtain the thing which they pray for.

Secondly, It is lawfull for Gods people to set apart a time for religious exercise, as did *Daniel*, and the rest of the servants of the Lord, who, notwithstanding the great afflictions, and persecutions which attended them for righteousnesse sake, and for their practice in the worship of God, yet did they continue not only to professe him openly, but to worship him after their accustomed manner, as appears by the Scriptures which *I. B.* hath instanced, *Dan.* 6. 10, 13. with several other Scriptures which might be mentioned, whose example herein I desire the Lord may instruct all Christians in sincerity to follow, and continue in the practice of the doctrines & exhortations of the Apostles and Ministers of Christ, who exhorted the Saints not to forsake the assembling themselvs together, as the manner of some was, *Heb.* 10. 25. but as the day approacheth, exhort one another, in which practice the true Christians ever did walk and continue, notwithstanding the cruel persecution & grievous afflictions that were inflicted upon them by ungodly men of this world for so doing, *viz.* their continuing in the profession of Christianity, and practice of meeting together, to wait upon, and worship the Lord in Spirit and truth, for which holy practice, so great were the sufferings and afflictions by them indured, (as may be read at large in Ecclesiastical Histories) that *Fox* saith in the book of Martyrs, what fires, what tortures, without respect either to age or sex they were inforced to feel; then did the earth without doubt bewail her children, and the round world which containeth all things (being imbrued with their bloud) made a doleful lamentation for them, and the day it self provoked to mourn, was amazed for them, when the very barbarous Nations rejoyce for their sakes, which received and harboured them when they were afraid, and fled from us, keeping them as it were in a most loving, and amiable captivity, to which I may say, Alas, alas that ever any that professe the same Christ, as these persecuted Christians suffered for, should now become persecutors, and not only of such as in words deny him, but even of such as confesse and believe in him, to be the only Saviour of the world. Surely the true Christian soul that seriously considereth, will be greatly afflicted, and the heart that sees it cannot but mourn in the beholding of the woful apostacy, darknesse, and delusions in which many thousand Christians are fallen, who professe Christ

Acts and Monuments, lib. 1. fol. 92.

624 in words, and yet walk so far contrary to the light of Christ, and are so far out of his nature, which is to shew kindnesse, mercy, and love to all men, not only to them that believe, but to them that believe not, even with long patience to instruct them, that they may believe, and repent; but the heart that is possessed with the true knowledge of the woful backsliding from the ancient doctrine and truth of the Gospel (in which those persecuted Christians walked both in, and after the Apostles dayes) beholding this dismal night that is come upon multitudes of Christians, cannot but even take up a lamentation, and cry, Alas, alas, that ever any who professe Christ should be so far void of his bowels, and mercies, and should have so far lost all tendernesse of conscience, that they should even now persecute their brethren, who professe and believe in the same God and Christ, as they in words professe and believe, having no other reason for their so doing, but only because they differ from them in some ceremonial and outward practices of Christianity. Alas, alas, that ever the Devil, the enemy of mankind should so far delude and deceive men, who agree in the outward profession of one God and Christ, which is the main and weighty matter in the outward profession of Christian Religion. Oh that ever they should be so far darkned, and misled to afflict and persecute about the smaller matters or outward practices of Religion, whenas it ought to be a duty incumbent upon all who professe the name of Christ, to perswade one another in the power of the Gospel: and if the true Christian cannot overcome the errour of the mind in the false Christian, after this manner he ought notwithstanding to walk in love towards him, and leave him to the Lord who is that great Potter that hath power over all men to change from errour to truth, and out of death into life, when, and what time soever he pleaseth.

Thirdly, Christians are to mind in that serious and weighty duty of Prayer, the motions and leadings of Gods Spirit, through which their infirmities are helped, and they not praying in their own name or will, but in the name of Christ, their prayers become effectual, and God answers them in the things they pray for, as it is written, *John* 14. 13, 14.

Fourthly, It is a duty incumbent upon all true Christians to use family duties, *viz.* to pray unto him as they are led thereunto by the heavenly birth and Spirit which of him they have received. And parents ought

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ought to instruct their Children by word, and godly example, as they may find the Spirit of Christ lead them so to do, by the virtue and authority of which their exhortations will become effectual to their children and servants, not only to turn them from errour unto truth, but to establish and build them up in the truth, that they may serve the Lord in their day; and herein all Christian parents and masters of families ought to follow the example of *Abraham*, in commanding their households after them to walk in the holy commands of God, and to serve him in their generation, *&c.*

Fifthly, the Scriptures were written for our learning; therefore it is necessary for Christians to read them, and to confer about the heavenly things signified of in them all their life long, as they are inclined thereunto by the life and Spirit that gave them forth; for though eternal life cannot be found in the Scriptures, yet they testify of Christ, in whom it is to be found; and the holy sayings contained therein, (which were given by the divine inspiration of God) are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousnesse, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works, 2 *Tim.* 16. 17. Therefore all true Christians prizeth the Scriptures, for unto such they are comfortable, and bear true testimony of that living way and truth, in and by which we have eternal redemption.

Sixthly, it is necessary for Gods people to pray unto him, and to beg his blessing with and upon those creaturely benefits which they receive from the hand of their heavenly Father, and to return him thanks for his unspeakable mercies towards them, which was the moving cause of that heavenly visitation by which the Lord God hath visited his people with the day spring from on high, through which many that have sate in darknesse, are now both come to see and walk in the light of life: blessed be the Lord our God for evermore.

7. Query. *Whether it be not lawfull for Christians to give a civil respect to the several degrees and relations in which persons may stand? as* (1.) *Whether the younger ought not to reverence the elder? as saith the Scripture, Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man,* Lev. 19. 32. *and* (2.) *Whether a Christian may not evidence his respect by some outward action or gesture of his body, according to the custome of the Countrey he liveth in? as* Abraham

626 *bowed to the ſons of Heth*, Gen. 23. 12. *So did* Nathan *a Prophet to King* David, 1 King. 1. 23. *and* (3.) *Is it not lawful for Chriſtians to expreſſe their reſpects by giving to every man the titles belonging to him, in reference to the ſeveral dignities or places they may be advanced to? as* Luke *doth* Theophilus, *calling him moſt excellent*, Luke 1. 3. *So* Paul *to* Felix, *calling him moſt noble* Felix, Acts 26. 25. *and* John *to the elect Lady*, 2 John 1.

Anſw. It is lawful for people to give civil reſpect to the ſeveral relations and degrees in which perſons may ſtand. Firſt, Chriſtians ought to reſpect with ſubjection and obedience, either actively, by doing the commands of their magiſtrates; or paſſively, by ſuffering for not doing, in caſe any thing ſhould be impoſed contrary to Gods law, and a good conſcience, by the authority, either ſet up, or permitted by the Lord to be ſet up over them, and in ſo doing they give the reſpect that is due to men, thus related unto them as Superiours, whoſe honour and reſpect conſiſts not in putting off the hat, and bowing the knee and body, but in obeying their juſt commands for the reſpect by adoring or bowing to mens perſons, who wear the gay cloathing, is forbidden, and he that gives it tranſgreſſeth the law of God, *James* 2. 9.

Secondly, the younger ought to reverence the elder by an inward love and reſpect. The true reverence from children to their parents hath its beeing in the heart, and is evidenced by outward obedience to their juſt and lawful commands, and bodily actions, of not deſpiſing them when their ſtrength faileth, but in lowlineſſe and humility to help them in their old age, not following the example of the Phariſees, whom our Saviour reproved for making the commands of God void by their traditions, which command was to honour father and mother, for they ſaid, whoſoever ſhould ſay to his father or mother, it is a gift by whatſoever thou might be profited by me, and honours not his father or mother, he ſhall go free, and thus they broke the command by their traditions, *Mat.* 15. 4, 5, 6, 7. Neither following the example of *Ham*, but the good example of *Shem* and *Iaphet*, who covered their fathers nakedneſſe, *Gen.* 9. 22, 23. and in ſo doing the love and reſpect of children is demonſtrated towards their parents, and not by putting off the hat, and bowing the knee according to the cuſtome of the countrey and people where they dwell; for both vain and idolatrous may

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the cuſtome of the people be herein, as in the dayes of old, *Ier.* 10. 32. Though *Abraham* did bow to the ſons of *Heth*, and *Nathan* to King *David* in that miniſtration, in which the types and ſhadows were in force, and the ſeed not come to full dominion, but he outwardly as a ſtranger in the land, which God had promiſed to give to his ſeed after him for an inheritance, I ſay *Abraham's* and *Nathan's* example herein is no more binding to Chriſtians under the Goſpel miniſtration, then is their example of ſwearing, outward circumciſion, with divers other things that they were commanded or permitted of God to doe in that miniſtration, *&c.*

Thirdly, it is lawfull for Chriſtians to give unto every man thoſe titles which of right belong unto him, according to the place or office to which he may be advanced, as to call a King, King; and a noble man, noble man; and a Judge, Judge; and a man that excells in reaſon and moderation may be called excellent, *&c.* In this wiſe a Chriſtian may expreſſe his love, and reſpect to perſons advanced to the aforementioned dignities, and not by worſhipping and adoring their perſons: for that is a tranſgreſſion of the law of God, *James* 2. 9.

8. Query. *Whether Chriſtians may not make uſe of, and take delight in thoſe creatures God affords us, either for food or clothing? And* (1.) *whether at ſometimes it be not lawful to feaſt and enjoy the creatures, afforded for our uſe in a lawful mirth? provided it be done in its proper ſeaſon and with moderation,* Eccl. 3. 12, 13. *And* (2.) *whether it be lawful for Chriſtians to wear what apparel they ſhall think beſt in their own Chriſtian prudence, to be apparelled in, if without exceſſe: did not God command the children of Iſrael that they ſhould borrow jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold of the* Egyptians, *Ex.* 11. 2. *And* Abraham's *ſervant gave unto* Rebecca *bracelets for her hands which ſhe alſo wore,* Gen. 24. 22, 30.

Anſw. Chriſtians may make uſe of the creatures, for through faith, and the birth immortal they only of all people upon earth have right to the creatures, as it is written, *Rom.* 4. 13. and 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. where the Apoſtle ſaith, All things are theirs, whether *Paul*, or *Apollo*, or *Cephas*, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours, *&c.* Yet in the creatures they muſt not ſo delight, as to love and worſhip them more then their Creatour, who

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is God blessed for ever. Therefore if any who professeth himself a Christian so love and delight in the creatures, as that his love and delight in the Lord is made lesse thereby, such a one may professe himself a Christian in words, but in works he denies Christ. Therefore all Christian men had need to be watchfull against the temptations of that lustful spirit of the world, which would lead them to abuse the creatures.

First, its lawful to enjoy the creatures afforded for us in the joy and mirth which cometh of, or is allowed by the Holy Ghost, but not in the vain mirth and foolish pleasures of sinful worldly men, who have their end in lamentation and woe; for it is better (as the wise man saith) to go to the house of mourning, then to the house of such mirth and feasting, for that is the end of all men, the living will lay it to heart, *Eccles.* 7. 2, 3. But if a man doth eat, and drink, and enjoy the good of his labour in the covenant of God that is to the praise of God, and to his spiritual and creaturely comfort, in this fading world, in which God fills his heart with content and satisfaction, whether he hath much or little of the perishing things of this life.

Secondly, its lawfull for a true Christian, who is guided by the Spirit of Christ, to wear what apparel he by the wisdome and instruction of the Spirit shall see both to be lawful and expedient for him to wear, that he in that, as in all other things, may give a good example, not only to them that are weak, but that also he may be a pattern of righteousnesse unto those that are without, and may shine as a light in the world, that they seeing his good works and example, may be made to glorifie his Father which is in heaven, *Mat.* 5. 16. Therefore the Apostle exhorted the Christian women to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastnesse, and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becometh women professing godlinesse with good works, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9, 10.

9. Query. *Whether when Christians are met together for the worship and service of God, they may then be silent, and depart without any thing done for the edification of one another? or* (1.) *Whether they ought not rather to stir up, and exhort one another to continue in the faith and practise of the Gospel? as the Apostles of old did, who when they met together spent the time in praying with and exhorting one another,* Acts 1. 13, 14. Acts 12. 12. (2.) *Whether to speak in a strange-*

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strange tongue, or to be wholly silent when the people of God are met together, be not one and the same thing? the former of which the Apostle forbids, as no way tending to edification, 1 *Cor.* 14. 4. to the 20.

Answ. When Christians are met together to worship God in Spirit, they may be silent if nothing be given them from the Lord to say, for God who is a Spirit may be as truly worshipped in Spirit, and adored in the hearts of his people when there is no words, as when there is words of God given them to speak to the edification one of another. But if any should meet together with a resolution to be silent, and not to wait for, but to quench the motions of the Spirit, if any thing should be given, this would be worse then to speak in an unknown tongue.

First, for if any thing be freely given, Christians ought freely to speak what from God they have received to the edification one of another, as the Saints of old did when they were met together, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26: Whether by prophecy, doctrine, or prayer.

Secondly, though people may sometimes meet in silence, in the name and truth of Jesus; yet it's not one and the same thing, with speaking in an unknown tongue, for the unknown tongue may be so far from edifying in the truth, that people may rather be led from the truth thereby. But when Christians are met together in Christ's name, though they be silent for a time, yet God hath, and will fulfill his promise by the manifestation of his presence amongst them, by whose spirit they receive inward teaching both to comfort, build up, and instruct them, so that many have gone away satisfied with the spiritual sence of the Lords heavenly presence, which hath been seen and enjoyed in silence amonst them, by the incomes of whose love his children are refreshed in preaching, and without outward preaching, glory unto his name for ever: whose spirit cannot be limited that he shall not appear to the joy and comfort of his people, either by, or without outward preaching; for it hath been the manner and practice of the Prophets, and people of God to sit together in silence, when nothing was given them of the Lord to say, though it was day after day as saith the Prophet, *Ezek.* 3. 15, 16. then I came to them of the captivity at *Telabib* that dwelt by the river *Chebar*, and sate where they sate, and remained there astonished among them seven dayes, and it came to pass at the end of seven dayes, the word of the Lord came unto me saying: so it seems they

630 they sate together in silence, till the word of the Lord came to the Prophet, although he was a Prophet, and the hand of the Lord upon him; yet must he not speak till it was given him from the Lord what he should say: and all preachers, and people, who are not in, but against this example in meetings together, are such as come under the woe due to them which use their tongues, and say he saith, howbeit the Lord hath not spoken to them, *Jer.*23.31. Therefore how much better were it for them to wait upon, and worship God in silence, when nothing is given them, or revealed unto any of them from the Lord to speak, then to use their tongues, when he hath not spoken to them: I shall leave to the sober minded to judge.

10. Query. *Whether Christians that do not palpably contradict the practice of Godliness, may not live with and have charity towards one another, though different in judgements? And,* (1.) *whether this hath not rendred the popish religion more odious, because they have so little charity for any that differ from them who stile all to be hereticks that are not of their way? Or,* (2.) *whether any of the Apostles, or our Saviour himself, did ever condemn others upon this account only, but on the contrary, when the Apostles told our Saviour they had seen one casting out Devils in his name, yet followed not him, Christ bids them not forbid him, alledging that he which is not against us is with us,* Luke 9.49, 50. *And so the Apostle would have every man perswaded in his own mind,* Rom. 14. 5. *and I know no reason why ye should condemn any man for being in the dark because he sees not by your light?*

Answ. Christians ought to have charity one towards another, and they who are true Christians have (not only in name but in nature) Charity, and love which reacheth even to those who differ from them in judgement.

First by love they labour to instruct those Christians who are in error, that if possible they might reclaim them from error, by the force of the love and word of God; but the spiritual striving and war (on the true Christian's part) is not against flesh and bloud, but against that spirit of darkness which misguides the mind. If the true Christian doth not hereby gain the false Christian to the way of life; yet he should walk in all love, and gentleness towards him, not endeavouring by force, and violence to destroy his body for the error of his mind, or to cut off his

his life from the earth, as the Papists and false Christians ever have done against those true Christians, whose minds and consciences they could never overcome, for which cruel persecution they have no example amongst the Ministers of Christ, whose practice therein hath stained their Church with the guilt of bloud, which hath and will cause a curse and infamy to come upon them, which never shall be forgotten.

Secondly, All men in the world are in the dark that in some measure sees not by the light of the Lamb in which we and all Nations of them that are saved must walk, *Rev.* 21. 24. But it is not the practice of Christians who are grown in grace to condemn and judge others, because they are not fully come up to their rule and degree of righteousnesse in every particular, though some who are young in the truth (and yet disciples) may through weaknesse (if not watchful and diligent to hearken unto their Lord and Master) even erre in those things as the disciples of old were apt to do, as *I. B.* hath already instanced, *Luke* 9. 49, 50. who forbid the man to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because he followed them not, and would have had fire to come down from heaven upon those *Samaritans* that did not presently receive him, *Luke* 9. 54.

11. Query. *Whether it be not the duty of Christians to observe and set apart one day in seven for the more solemn service of God? and* (1.) *Whether God himself did not appoint, and the people of God in all ages keep such a day*, Gen. 2. 2, 3. *Exod.* 20. 8. (2.) *Whether the Sabbath was ever abrogated by Jesus Christ, or only changed, and another kept in the room of the first; and* (3.) *Whether the first day of the week be not the true Christian Sabbath? We read that it was the custome of the Apostles chiefly to meet on this day*, John 20. 19. Acts 20. 7. *and that they made collections for the poor on this day*, 1 Cor. 16. 2. *and* John *was in the Spirit on the Lords day*, Rev. 1. 10.

Answ. Christians did set apart times to wait upon and worship the Lord in Spirit and truth, and they did meet together to perform this solemn service and duty to God upon the first day of the week, as the Scriptures testify which *I. B.* hath instanced, and that on that day they made collections for charitable uses.

First, But that they were commanded in the same manner to observe that day, as the Jews were to observe the seventh day, that I must de-

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ny; and I also do deny that that day was set apart and brought in th room of the seventh day to answer that end for which the seventh day Sabbath was given, which was a sign of that happy restauration which should and is come to mankind by the glorious Gospel of Christ, in whose day mans soul is redeemed from the bondage of corruption, and recovered from under the sore travail and pain of the curse, into the liberty of Gods children, where all weighs and burthens are cast off, and the soul comes to be perfectly freed from its long captivity and sore bondage, through which it returns into that spiritual rest which the outward day was but a shadow of, and all who are come into this endlesse Sabbath, or holy day of God, their souls dwell at ease, and they are in perfect rest, so as to bear no burthen, neither to travail under the load of sin and the curse any more; and this is a small hint of that felicity and happy state which God in mercy figured out unto man, while he was yet under the burthen by the outward Sabbath day, or sign of rest, as it is written, I gave them my Sabbath for a sign, between me and them, *Ezek.* 20. 12. *Col.* 2. 16. Let no man judge you in meats, or in drinks in respect of an holy day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath day, which are shadows of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Therefore I say the day of Christ being dawned, and he the substance being come, the outward figure must needs be abrogated, and the shadow past away.

12. Query. *Whether it be not lawful for Christians to swear, if called thereunto for the attestation of some truth? and* (1.) *Whether* Abraham *did sin in making his servant to swear unto him.* Gen. 24. 3. *Or* (2.) *Whether swearing be not a ready way to put an end to all controversies, as the Apostle saith,* Heb. 6. 16.

Answ. This is a point about which much hath been very fully and clearly written by several other hands, therefore I need not say much to it, only this I say; 'tis not lawfull for a Christian under the Gospel ministration to swear.

First, though *Abraham* did not sin in causing his servant to swear, and though those holy men did not sin, who (under the first covenant) swore the Lord lived in truth, righteous, and judgement (swearing and many other things being then lawfull for them to practice) yet, such things are not lawfull, neither usefull for the Saints to practice under the Gospel, this particular practice of swearing was not in the old Covenant

venant forbidden. Therefore our Saviour saith, *Mat.* 5. it hath been said of old time, thou shalt not forswear thy self, but performe thine oaths unto the Lord. But he gives his Disciples a new command, quite contrary to what was practised herein by the people of God in the old time, in that he saith unto them, swear not at all, neither by Heaven for it is Gods Throne, nor by the Earth for it is his Footstool, neither by *Jerusalem* for it is the City of the great King, neither shalt thou swear by thine Head, because thou can'st not make one hair white, or black, *Mat.* 5. 34, 35, 36. By this absolute command he not only forbids vain swearing, which was fully forbidden in the law of God before, but he positively excludes all manner of swearing in the dayes of the Gospel, and likewise the Apostle saith, *James* 5. 12. Above all things my brethren swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth neither by any other oath, but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, least you fall into condemnation: which two testimonies are sufficient to confirme the truth unto all true Christian men, that it is in no wise lawfull for them to swear in any case. Many more testimonies might be instanced out of the Ecclesiastical histories of the ancient Christians; some of whome, holding it in no wise lawfull for Christian men to swear, suffered death for the profession of Christ. a *Polycarpus* who, as 'tis said, was *John*'s Disciple, b *Basilides* a Christian Martyr, and the *Waldenses*, whose names are so famous among the reformed Churches, and are said immediately to succeed the Apostles, being the most ancient, and true Protestants, professed it to be no way lawfull for a Christian man to swear; and the c Plow-man in his prayer, and *Chrisostome* who was Bishop of *Constantinople* blameth them greatly that brought forth a book to swear upon, charging Clarks that in no wise they constrain any body to swear, whether they think a man swear true or false, saying, d it is a sin to swear well. And these forementioned testimonies, with many others which might be instanced out of Ecclesiastical histories, were given against swearing, and though the Apostle saith, *Heb.* 6. 16. That an oath for confirmation amongst men is to them an end of strife; yet this doth in no wise justifie, or prove swearing lawfull amongst Christians; for he speaks that by way of allusion, as being the strongest bond in the old time (in which the promise was made) whereby men could

a *Acts & Monuments* Vol. 2. fol. 55.
b *Euseb.* lib. 6. cap. 4. pag. 98.
c *Acts & Monuments*. Vol. 1. fol. 527.
d *Acts & Monuments*. Vol. 2 70.

634 bind themſelves, to ſet forth unto believers the certainty of Gods promiſe, being confirmed by ſuch a ſtrong bond as an oath was among men in the old time, when the promiſe was made to *Abraham*, and his ſeed after him; and as for the Apoſtles ſaying, an oath among men is to them an end of ſtrife, I ſay, that did rather allude, or relate to what was at any time done for the ending of ſtrife amongſt thoſe *Hebrews*, who had not received the Goſpel, then that any ſuch thing was done or practiſed, amongſt thoſe believers to whom he writ his Epiſtle. For if he had inſtanced any ſuch practice amongſt them he ſhould not have ſaid an oath amongſt men, but an oath amongſt you, &c. Which he did not.

13. Query. *Whether it be not the great duty and concernment of every Chriſtian to plead for and vindicate all ſuch Goſpel truths as he hath formerly received, and yet believeth, and* (1.) *whether a Chriſtian may not earneſtly contend for the truth once delivered?* Jude 3. (2.) *whether it be not the duty of all Chriſtians with readineſs to render an account of his faith to him that asketh him?* 1 Pet. 3. 15. *And* (3.) *whether it be not your concernment to return ſome ſatisfactory anſwer to the Author of theſe Queries.*

Anſw. It is a duty of concernment to every child of God both to plead for, and vindicate the truth, (the knowledge of which he hath received of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt) by the utmoſt force of thoſe ſpiritual weapons, or arguments wherewith he is furniſhed thereunto, by the word, and counſel of the Lord, againſt all thoſe that may gainſay it, in doctrine, practice, or converſation, following the example of the Apoſtles, and meſſengers of the great King. The weapons of whoſe warfar were not carnal, neither was their war againſt the fleſh and bloud of men in error: but the weapons wherewith they warred were ſpiritual, and mighty through God to the deſtroying of that ſpirit of wickedneſs, which leads into error, and alſo to the recovering many out of error, who have been captivated in error. And they that are furniſhed with the ſpiritual wiſdome, word, and power of the Lord God, by which many are turned to righteouſneſs, they ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of heaven, and as the ſtarrs for ever and ever.

Laſtly, it's the duty of the children of God, who in meaſure experience redemption, and ſanctification by Chriſt Jeſus, to give a reaſon (according to their ability with meekneſs and fear) of that precious hope, and faith, through which they have, or may overcome in the day of tryal,

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tryal, and hour of temptation, which cometh upon all the world to try them, that dwell upon the Earth; and that excellent hope and faith (in which the Saints are preserved in this day, and hour of tryal, and through which they shall be purified, and made more white, that their innocency may shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdome of their Father, and which keeps from fainting to the end) is of more worth then gold that perisheth, and is not to be valued with all created excellencies, or compared with any glory of this fading world, therefore I may say of the faith and hope, of which Christians ought to give a reason, as *Job* did of wisdome, man knows not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living.

Having in the love and fear of the Lord returned an answer to *I. B.* his Queries, and therein given some reason and account of our faith and judgement in the things queried, its desired that *I. B.* may answer these following Queries, in the same love, that we may know a reason of his faith and judgement concerning the things queried.

Query 1. *Whether Christ by that one act of his death and suffering hath so done away or blotted out the sins of the children of men, that the divine justice of his father is so answerd, or satisfied thereby, that he looks upon men to be in his Son, notwithstanding they are yet sinners, and accepts them, as perfectly righteous in his sight, only in and through what Iesus hath done for them by his death upon the Crosse?*

Query 2. *Whether God who is the righteous Judge of all the world, doth so impute his righteousnesse as to justifie any man upon the earth thereby, in the self same capacity as his righteous law in Christ condemns him?*

Query 3. *Whether any man upon earth is absolutely acquitted and freed from sin, by virtue of what Christ hath done and suffered without, whiles as yet the witnesse of Gods Spirit in his own heart and conscience condemns him?*

Query 4. *Whether there is any such thing, as that any mans sins are done away past, present, and to come, whiles as yet he doth not cease to commit sin?*

Query 3.

Query 5. *And if the eternal God doth impute the righteousnesse of his Son, so as to justifie any, while they do not yet, cease to commit sin, why doth he not so unto all, seeing all his ways are equal, and there is no respect of persons with him?*

Query 6. *What, and where is that law by which comes the knowledge of sin, without which the Apostle said he was alive, but when it came sin revived, and he died?*

Query 7. *Was it only the letter of the ten Commandments without him, which he had and was zealous for, while he was yet alive in sin, or the light and Spirit of Gods law inwardly manifested in his heart?*

Query 8. *And if so, whether it was not the very same law in nature and quality as made him free from the law of sin and death?*

Query 9. *And what, and where is that law which the Apostle saith hath dominion over a man, so long as he liveth, through which he is bound as a woman by the law of her husband, is it the law of God or the law of sin?*

Query 10. *If it be the law of sin, how and by what means may those persons which are bound by it, come to know the heavenly virtue of the body of Christ, through which they may die to it, and know the chain broken?*

Query 11. *Whether the example of all that the Apostles and Saints practised in the primitive times be absolute binding at this day to Christians?*

Query 12. *Whether many outward things, which rather pertained to the typical or shadowy part of the Law that is vanished away, then to the glorious Gospel, was not practised by Christian believers under the ministration of the Gospel in the Apostles dayes?*

Query 13. *And if so, what was the absolute reason thereof, was it because the Apostles were commanded therennto by God, or because of the weaknesse of the people that he suffered his ministers to bear with them for a time, that could not (while young in the truth, and their eyes much outward) easily be brought off of many outward things pertaining to the Law?*

Query 14. *What was the Apostles end or Gods end by them in not only permitting or suffering those persons that received their Gospel testimony, to practise many ordinances and shadows pertaining to the law, but that also they did sometime practise them themselves? was it because*

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cauſe the Lord had a purpoſe to eſtabliſh them as his ordinances to be practiſed by all ages, or were they allowed to practiſe them in the peoples weakneſſe for a time, that thereby they might gain the more out of them into that everlaſtlaſting truth which is the ſubſtance of types and ſhadows where people come to ſee beyond all outward things?

Query 15. *And if they that were partakers of the everlaſting ſubſtance did make uſe and continue in the practiſe of any outward things which were but outwardly ſhadows of what they inwardly enjoyed, was it becauſe they had need ſo to do, or becauſe of the weakneſſe of others?*

Query 16. *Whether* John's *Baptiſm with water was not of, and belonging to the miniſtration of the Law, under which the carnal waſhings and outward ordinances were in force?*

Query 17. *And if ſo, why was water Baptiſm practiſed by the Apoſtles under the Goſpel, was it done by abſolute command from God, as neceſſary unto ſalvation, or to anſwer the weakneſſe of thoſe believing Chriſtians, who after they believed, deſired it, and being weak could not well be ſatisfied without it?*

Query 18. *And if it was done by abſolute command from God, as neceſſary to ſalvation, how is it that the Apoſtle* Paul *(who was made inſtrumental to convert ſo many thouſands) had not a command to baptize with water, as well as to preach the Goſpel?*

Query 19. *And if to anſwer the deſire of Chriſtians in weakneſſe was not the reaſon of the Apoſtles baptizing with water, but that they had an abſolute commiſſion to do it from God; then I deſire, that (in anſwer to this Query) the Scripture or Scriptures (if there be any) may be ſhewed, in which water is expreſſed to be that means with which they were to baptize Chriſtians into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt?*

I. S.

THE END.